Alcoholis Beverages falling under heading No. 2208.90 of the Customs Tariff Act since December, 1994. the valuation of the concentrate of Alcoholic Beverages imported by M/s Seagram since December, 1994 is under investigation. Appropriate action as warranted under the provisions of Customs Act, 1962 would be taken on completion of investigation in this case.

CBI raids on the residence of Customs Officials

2074. SHRIMATI KAMLA SINHA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be bleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in recent raids conducted by the C.B.I. on the residence of certain customs officials and the Mumbai Air Cargo Complex, huge amount of unaccounted wealth was discovered?

(b) if so, what are the details thereof; and

(c) what action has been taken by Government in the matter;

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI V. DHANANJAYA KUMAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) A Surprise check was undertaken by C.B.I at the Air Cargo Complex, Mumbai on 18.11.99. On the basis of the search conducted, C.B.I. registered a criminal case against 17 customs officials. They have also searched the residence of three customs officers, following which C.B.I has registered cases against 2 customs officials for possessing assets disproportionate to their known source of income.

(c) Pending receipt of full investigation report from C.B.I, three Customs officers have been placed under suspension and 14 officers have been transferred out of Air Cargo Complex, Mumbai, and posted in non-sensitive work. Besides, a number of strong measures have been taken to tighten the administrative control as a whole in the entire Customs organization of Mumbai.

Appointment on compassionate grounds in UCO Bank

†2075. SHRI DEBABRATA BISWAS: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether appointment on compassionate grounds in Nationalised Bank has been banned, if so, the reasons therefor;

(b) whether different directions have been issued for different banks regarding appointment on compassionate grounds; if so, the directives for UCO Bank;

(c) the number of Bank-officials who died during 1997-1998 in North Zone of UCO Bank;

(d) whether UCO Bank has appointed the dependents of deceased members on compassionate grounds, during the above period; and

(e) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor and the number of cases pending?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI BALASAHEB VIKHE PATIL): (a) and (b) No, Sir. Appointments on compassionate grounds in nationalised banks (including UCO Bank) are made by the bank concerned, with the approval of the competent authority, as per the scheme formulated by them for such appointments with the approval of their Boards, keeping in view the guidelines issued by the Government, from time to time.

(c) According to UCO Bank, their 13 bank officials died in the Northern Zone from January, 1997 to December, 1998.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) UCO Bank has further reported that the bank could not give appointment to the wholly dependants of the deceased from the middle of May, 1997 to December, 1998 since the bank was in the process of amending their existing scheme in the light of Supreme Court judgement. The revised scheme has been approved by the Board of the Bank on 7.9.1999 and the branches/offices of the bank have been advised to send the applications of the wholly dependants of the deceased for consideration of the bank as per the revised scheme. According to the bank 19 cases relating to the Northern Zone are pending.

Financial crisis being faced by Assam Government

2076. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that due to serious financial crisis, the